

A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

D E C E M B E R 20, 1778,

I N T H E

P a r i s h C h u r c h o f N O R T H C R A Y, i n K E N T,

O C C A S I O N E D B Y T H E

D E A T H

O F T H E

R E V. W I L L I A M H E T H E R I N G T O N, A. M.

O F N O R T H C R A Y P L A C E,

A n d R e c t o r o f F A R N H A M R O Y A L, i n B U C K I N G H A M S H I R E,

W h o d i e d D E C E M B E R 1, 1778, a g e d 80.

B Y T H O M A S M O O R E, A. M.

R e c t o r o f N O R T H C R A Y a n d F o o t ' s C R A Y,

A n d f o r m e r l y F E L L O W o f W O R C E S T E R C O L L E G E, O X F O R D.



T O

THOMAS COVENTRY, Esq;

OF NORTH CRAY PLACE, IN KENT;

Member of Parliament for the Town of BRIDPORT,
in DORSETSHIRE;And One of the Worshipful the MASTERS of the BENCH, of the
Honourable SOCIETY of the INNER TEMPLE;

T H I S

S M A L L T R I B U T E,

Of sincere and grateful Regard to the MEMORY
of his most amiable FRIEND,

AND AFFECTIONATE KINSMAN,

I S R E S P E C T F U L L Y

I N S C R I B E D,

By his obliged humble Servant,

THO. MOORE.

A

THOMAS GOVERNMENT

OF NORTH CAROLINA

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IN SENATE

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IT is requested of those who shall honour the Author with their acceptance of the following DISCOURSE, that they will consider it merely as a local testimony; in which he endeavoured to express, with sincerity and respect, what he felt to be his own sense, and was persuaded was that of his hearers, in regard to the merits of that most excellent Person, of whom they had been then recently deprived. He is conscious that many more topics of commendation might have been collected into a review of this distinguished character, but he was contented to confine himself to those which were most obvious, as carrying with them the justest appeal to the

general and particular experiences of his audience. If this may make an apology still more necessary for venturing an imperfect encomium beyond the limits of the place where Truth and Duty called for some public commemoration, he confesses he has but one to offer, yet one, which he flatters himself will meet with favourable allowance from those principally ³ to ¹ whom ² he has taken the liberty to present it, “ the Friends and Acquaintance of the deceased”, and that is, —
GRATITUDE.

NORTH CRAY,

22 FEB. 1779.

1 CHRONICLES xxix. 28.

HE DIED IN A GOOD OLD AGE; FULL OF DAYS,
RICHES, AND HONOUR.

WITH this summary, the sacred Historian concludes the life of the Patriarch King, * “the man after God’s own heart”: selecting those reputable circumstances which attended it’s period, and, together with a course of eminent transactions, have consecrated his name to everlasting remembrance. The exercises by which he was called to approve his piety, were indeed arduous as well as exalted: his destinations were, in the order of Providence, most important and eventful: and the attainment of them conducted through dangers and distress, ere they were accomplished with happiness and honour. But there are peaceful, as well as per-
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* 1 Samuel xiii. 14.

lous paths to immortality : and scenes of private life that exhibit virtue with a native purity and lustre, to which neither the glories of heroism, nor the splendour of royalty, can give additional brightness. The mere mention of such virtue, especially when attended with the consequences recited in the text, will immediately carry your thoughts to the example of another chosen servant of God, who engaged our last mournful attendance in this house ; and whom it pleased the Almighty to call away from us, under parallel circumstances with those which distinguished the departure of the venerable Patriarch. But in these recollections which I cannot anticipate, permit me to bear you company ; and I shall then hope that the suggestion of your own sentiments, will kindly supply the very imperfect expression of mine : and that our combined tribute of respect, though far short of justice, will at least testify affection, to the memory of our lamented, loved, and honoured benefactor.

The qualities necessarily connected with every remembrance of the deceased, are so literally and expressly described in the text, that we are thereby in some sort guided within what limits to confine,

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as well as on what topics to apply, our present meditations on a subject, otherwise, too copious for so brief and restrained a discussion. Nor are we without example in the royal Preacher, himself the son and successor of David, for such a direction of our thoughts. Filial piety prompted him, when drawing the picture of religious wisdom, to delineate it with those respectable emblems, in which the recollection of his venerable parent presented it to his imagination, as bearing * “ length of days
“ in the right hand, and in the left hand riches
“ and honour”. In like manner, we may not unwarrantably dwell on the same instrumental grounds of reputation and reward, as characteristic of our paternal friend: nor be thought to lessen a name, which can never be too much extolled, by deriving its principal praises from the application of those circumstances which graced his dissolution,
“ IN A GOOD OLD AGE, FULL OF DAYS, RICHES
“ AND HONOUR”.

It cannot, I presume, require any argument to prove, though it may be proper to premise, that

• Proverbs iii. 16.

every

every allotment of our condition, as well as every extent of our lives, is of the same Divine appointment and disposal. The praise of the Almighty is perfected, as is his power shewn, in each destination of our fortunes, assignment of our talents, and measure of our days. It is no less obvious, that our respective duties grow out of, and correspond with our several capacities and circumstances: and that the rule of final judgment on our actions is founded in the clearest natural justice, as well as upon the most certain Divine authority, that * “ to “ whomsoever much is given” (in whatever the abundance consists) “ of him shall much be required.”

Length of life, whether appointed to us for a trial, or indulged as a blessing, while it offers it's venerable claim to receive superiour respect, confesses it's obligation at the same time to have superiour merit. There is indeed a becoming deference due to the mere experience of days; nay, a regardful attention to the very imbecilities of age: but whatever their privileges may be, the comforts, the joys, the triumphs, of the “ Ancient”, are neither founded in prescription, nor can be derived from weakness. They must
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* Luke xii. 48.

proceed from an higher source, and be established on a surer basis. It is only the GOOD OLD AGE that contains real dignity in itself, and bids fair for the constant veneration of others: and that FULLNESS OF DAYS alone which comes fraught with accumulated virtues, deserves to be completely honoured, and is sure to be intrinsically happy. * “ For honour-
 “ able age is not that which standeth in length of
 “ time, nor that is measured by number of years:
 “ but wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an
 “ unspotted life is old age ”. And the † “ hoary
 “ head is ” then “ a crown of glory, when it is found
 “ in the way of righteousness ”. These remarks immediately recall to our minds that truly “ reverend ” example which we have been wont to behold with admiration and love, but must now be content to reflect on, with respectful and grateful remembrance. Goodness was the source and centre of all his actions, varying only with the means of applying it, and the uses to which it served. While the peace and tranquility of his mind were securely established by the constant testimony of an unaccusing conscience,

* Wisdom of Solomon iv. 8, 9.

† Proverbs xvi. 31.

the pleasures of it were evermore supplied by the unceasing effusions of its own benignity: both together producing that uncommon cheerfulness, that gaiety of spirit, in which he felt and gave so much delight, and which were the pure result of virtuous simplicity, and cordial benevolence.

There is in many, perhaps in all constitutions some prevailing bias, according to the influence of which we feel most inclined to guide our course of life, and form our habits of action. It is both the duty and the prerogative of Reason, aided by Divine grace, to distinguish the tendency of such natural impulse; and to apply it in conformity to the laws of religion and virtue: to bring into due subjection to the higher principles of the constitution, every passion and inclination of an hurtful aim or consequence; but to cherish and promote every powerful disposition in nature that has a virtuous end and salutary influence. In such an happy co-operation of affection, sentiments, and endeavour, did this good man's life eminently concur.---It was not only his nature, but it was his philosophy, his virtue, and his religion too, to be "kind and benevolent".

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I scruple not to pronounce that “ a desire to make
 “ as many of his fellow-creatures happy as he
 “ could, was the leading principle of the actions
 “ of his life”. It accompanied every period of
 his age, and every condition of his fortune. When
 his substance was no more than competent, it re-
 strained not the desire, but only limited the execu-
 tion of it; when it became enlarged, the resolu-
 tions extended with the means: when it grew opu-
 lent, both endeavour and effect were boundless.
 This charming philanthropy was so wrought into,
 and pervaded his whole system, that it was the ever
 present idea of all his thoughts, the very feature
 of his countenance, the voice of his language, and
 the spirit of his deeds: it filled every instruction,
 and directed every application of his profession;
 gave dignity to his sincere and unambitious mini-
 stry; and would have added a lustre to stations of
 high eminence in it, if his humility cou’d have suf-
 fered him to have sought after any. The same
 “ good will towards men” (the characteristic of our
 blessed religion) intermixed with all his other connec-
 tions and attachments, by whatever objects it was
 attracted, or to whatever extent it reached. It was
 indeed sometimes more diffuse, and comprehended
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multitudes; at other times it appeared more limited; but the principle was invariably the same; whether enlarged on the scale of universal humanity, or confined to the relief of particular distress: whether it attended to the regards of friendship, the respects of neighbourhood and acquaintance, the recollections of education and early correspondence, or the claims of service and dependance. It mattered little which way his purposes were directed: "the desire to make happy" was always the end in view. This was his study, and his amusement: this enlivened all his conversations, graced all his courtesies, sweetened his condescensions, cheered his easy hours, and beamed amidst his sufferings: it diffused itself in all his living bounties, and dictated all his dying bequests. No wonder, if to the latest rays of such an old age as this, not only friendship continued sincere veneration, and gratitude yielded unwearied attention, but universal love and applause accompanied every mention of his name, and must ever accompany every reference to his memory. His, were those rare attainments to be "aged in the extreme" without lessening affection; "rich" in the greatest abundance, without exciting envy; and "honoured" with the highest reputation

reputation, without provoking slander. He never came within these sacred walls, 'till the last solemn entrance, but your countenances gladdened at his appearance: he never quitted his doors, 'till the last mournful exit, but admiration waited on his steps, and rejoiced at his going forth. " When the
 " ear heard, then it blessed him, and when the
 " eye saw, then it gave witness to him; because he
 " delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless,
 " and him that had none to help him: the blessing
 " of him that was ready to perish came upon him,
 " and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
 " He was eyes to the blind, and feet was he to the
 " lame. He was" in every application of parental support and protection "a Father to the poor".

To enumerate the various and well-concerted charities of this excellent person, would be to give a detail of his diurnal proceedings, for no day passed without affording some instance of his benevolence and goodness. And though his benefactions were conducted without the least display of pomp or ostentation, which his soul abhorred in every shape, yet they were many of them of a kind which could

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not be concealed. They were in some degree like the benignant mercies of his great Master, (whose humility as well as love was ever his pattern) which their effects would necessarily discover and objects industriously proclaim; and “the fame whereof was “the more spread abroad, the more he charged them “that they should tell no man”. But there were besides some peculiarities in their circumstances, marking them distinctly to be his; and which though they may not be in general unknown, yet seem upon the present occasion, intitled to a particular remembrance and commendation.

And first, be it recollected, that he did not obtain these great sources of liberality, ’till he was nearly arrived at the usual extremity of the “days of man”. He was bordering upon the period of threescore years and ten, when his great views began to open, in proportion to the enlargement of his fortune. And yet this is too generally the season, in which we find the current of liberality frozen up; and the generous warmths of an earlier age checked by care and distrust, and often extinguished by indifference and insensibility. But it was not in the
power

power of time to diminish the natural impulse of his soul. The fountain of his generosity was deep and perennial; which in the summer of life was not exhausted, nor congealed at the approach of winter. When this exuberance of wealth came upon him like an inundation, it swelled indeed the streams, but did not at all divert the course of his rational benevolence. The consideration of the years that had preceded, were to him so many "MEMENTO'S" of the short remainder. He resolved to snatch from Death the victory of surprizing him * "at rest in his possessions". I can never forget an expression which fell from his lips very soon after the devolution of his vast inheritance, when referring himself to his declining years and increased wealth, he observed, that "there was but little time, and a great deal of money: he hoped God would enable him to MAKE HASTE to enjoy it". It might seem impertinent here to mention, but in instance of the nature of "his enjoyments", the great kindness with which he accompanied this declaration, in promising immediately to facilitate and enlarge the intentions of my honoured Patron.

* Eccles. xli. 1.

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and other worthy benefactors, in providing a comfortable residence for me and my successors: a circumstance which then gave me great pleasure in the contemplation, and hath been endeared to me more and more by every day's experience. What "haste" he made, and what "enjoyments" he administered and received, (for the joys were reciprocal,) have been witnessed in a rapid succession, nay an unceasing course of benefits to every person, place, society, or establishment, which had any reasonable pretensions to his bounty and favour.

It deserves to be especially noticed, that he commenced his glorious plan of operations, by laying the foundation in a work of most useful piety; and dedicated the first fruits of his affluence to the honour of God, and the service of Religion; by erecting an additional house of worship near his favourite seminary, the place of his own education. This he projected and carried into execution with a laudable view; as the church was not sufficient for the numbers to whom it belonged; and the people were like to lose all the benefits of devotion, for want of a place where they might conveniently assemble. His provision for their better accommodation

dation, besides it's substantial use, credits it's "reverend" author, in being the pious offering with which he thought fit to introduce, and, as it were, to sanctify all his ensuing liberalities.

Nor let it be deemed a professional partiality to boast, that his next attention was to the respect and interest (in a point too of very tender concern) of that holy order, which he so much honoured with his affection, and by his example. It is hardly needful (in this place at least) to explain, that a reference is here intended to that generous gift with which he augmented a *neighbouring foundation for the support of "twenty widows of loyal and orthodox Clergymen". This by the circumstances of the times had greatly decreased in real, though not in nominal value, 'till restored by his most liberal† donation, and the further noble appointment of our late venerable Diocesan‡. By their means it has recovered nearly the same condition in which it was originally conceived by it's munificent founder.

* Bromley College, founded by Bp. Warner.

† £. 2000. ‡ £. 5000.

The preservation of it in this state yet liable to the same, perhaps increasing causes of diminution and decay, or the enlargement of it in any other, are objects still humbly held forth to the rich and benevolent, with the additional incitements of these worthy and illustrious examples to animate their imitation. And while the interests even of religion itself are, it is hoped, not immodestly urged in behalf of this or the like charities, the gratitude of the servants of religion will at least be engaged, to honour the names and bless the memories of all such, who have or shall contribute to rescue so many of them from the dread of having the utter destitution of their surviving families, added to the other painful solitudes of their profession. But to leave this digression.

Another observable enhancement of his benefactions is, that they have not only risen superiour to such difficulties as his own age might have (not uncommonly) objected, but that they have infinitely exceeded every thing that the age itself in which he lived, of all others the most remarkable for it's charities, has produced from any individual. And
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this no less in the greatness of design, than in the time and manner of execution. His institution for the relief of the unfortunate blind, (a class of sufferers hitherto unbenefited by any settled provision) was attended with circumstances which shew how much he reflected and felt, before he fully entered upon his purposes, and do no less honour to his piety and magnanimity, than to his charity and compassion. As it was his misfortune to have some of his family, for whom he had ever entertained the greatest affection, suffer, through length of years, a diminution of sight, and as he knew not how soon he might be brought into a like state of darkness, it probably suggested to him that kind attention to others who laboured under that calamity, and especially to those, who, with the same evil, had not the same comforts and necessities of life. This cannot be thought to lessen the merit of his purpose; nor to detract from his humanity and goodness. For surely there is not only an allowable, but a very laudable consistency, (and it has been observed before by an approved writer *, in allusion to this very calamity of blindness) in the rich selecting their fellow-sufferers

* Addison in the Spectator.

among

among the poor, as belonging to their particular protection; and adopting as it were into a participation of their family-bleffings, those who become thus allied to them in a refemblance of their family diftreffes. Their piety feems to be founded in a very wife and juft conception of Divine Providence, who can trace Heaven's direction of thofe bleffings which they enjoy, in the train of evils which at the fame time are difclofed to their view: who from their fufferings can read the purpofes of the Deity, and difcern the true ufe and application of the good things with which they are at the fame time entrusted.

It was a further credit to the inflitution to which we are here referring, at leaft to the large heart of the compaffionate projector, that he had hoped and prefumed it would comprehend every unrelieved individual in England fuffering by this misfortune. The multitude of objects* offering for the firft diftribution of this charity, did much exceed this, and any expectation; and made it neceffary to guard it with fome immediate regulations, and ufeful reftrictions; which, though they have unavoidably

* Seven hundred and fifteen.

abridged the extent, have seasonably corrected the application of this benefaction. That as it stands now, by the largeness of it's well-appointed donation, a noble monument of the great piety and munificence of it's founder, so, by the incompetency of the same, however large, it holds itself forth to the public for imitation and improvement, which it is hoped it will not be long without. I will just add, that the wisdom, as well as kindness of this provision, hath appeared in attaching it to a most respectable corporation, and at the sametime indulging the objects with the enjoyments of it at their several homes: thereby blending the security of a public establishment, with the comforts of a domestic relief: a consideration of still further use, in that while it leaves each comforted sufferer to bless his merciful benefactor in his own humble corner, it may by that means, in every quarter, prompt the generous, and rouse the inattentive rich, to thoughts and deeds of similar compassion.

One more observation is peculiarly due to the honour of this good man's benefactions, and that is, that they were purely his own: not more the effect of his own expence, than they were the off-

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spring of his own heart, and the result of his own judgment. I speak this of his principal benefactions, for of his lesser bounties and daily distributions, he kindly invited every fair suggestion, and accepted every reasonable representation. Those worthy and honourable characters, who were the willing abettors, and ready instruments of his great designs, were yet as unable to anticipate as they would have been unwilling to have prescribed to his generous inclinations, and noble sentiments. If any exception is admitted to this exclusive testimony, it must be in justice to the ever respectable memory of that incomparable lady his * sister: who was indeed his kindred spirit: with whom he lived in the most affectionate harmony, and unreserved confidence: of whose understanding he had a very high opinion: who was a glad partner in very many of his charities, and had probably a due share in all his deliberations. In other respects, his designs were as original, as the execution of them was unparallelled: and that "ornament to humanity", as some perhaps more judicious, I trust, not more sincere reverer of his name, has concisely

* Mrs. Elizabeth Hetherington of Queen's Square, London, who died Nov. 24, 1776, in the 79th year of her age.

characte-

characterised it, shines forth unrivalled for the genuineness, as well as for the ^{brilliancy} ~~brilliancy~~ of it's lustre.

To the above enlargement upon these charities, and upon the mode and discretion with which they were conducted, it may be proper to add something particular of the benign spirit from whence they proceeded. And surely there never was a more serene and heavenly disposition. To say that the "sun never went down upon his wrath," would be in a manner idle: for there did not seem to be any such ingredient in his blameless composition. Nobody ever saw him angry: nor did he appear to give way even to just and reasonable resentment. His mind was like a summer-sea, which may be a little moved and ruffled, but soon returns to it's original calmness. It was like a sea, in whose bosom, the heavens are seen, as in a mirror, and their purity and mildness are displayed. Those only who were more intimately acquainted with him, could sometimes by little indications perceive, that he was at all aggrieved. And this did not arise from apathy and insensibility, for few were endowed with quicker perceptions or more lively feelings. But the whole proceeded from a natural benignity of soul, which
religion

religion and reflection had enhanced to a wonderful degree.

With these distinguishing features of Christian goodness, did this merciful man bless his fellow-creatures, make his own existence happy, his expectations glorious, and his reward certain. His previous sufferings were indeed great, and his prayers for final deliverance, hearty: but neither his pains made him insensible to one misery he could alleviate, nor his sufferings forgetful of one benefit he could confer. He died, as he lived, full of kind wishes, and kind offices: and entered upon the glories of his own everlasting happiness, with a most devout and fervent ejaculation for " Divine blessing upon the whole world".

I presume it can be neither needful nor becoming in me to appeal to the general obligations of this assembly, to confirm the veneration, in which his name ought to be ever held in this place and neighbourhood. It is not from our gratitude, though strongly engaged, and I trust, deeply impressed, but from our justice and truth, that his character of goodness claims our full and united testimony:
and

and as the sincerity of our own professed convictions, and the best application of his example will most appear in adopting his maxims, and pursuing his recommendations, you will permit me, (as a fit supplement to the foregoing remarks) to select one, and that of most comprehensive extent, by which he governed his life, and which almost accompanied his dissolution.

I am warranted then to say that the last exhortation he was able to dictate to his surrounding domestics, (called together to receive his farewell blessing and advice) was, "have peace and love one another:" a lesson ever in the mouth of his Divine Master while on earth, and faithfully copied, and constantly applied by this good servant; and pathetically urged to his attendants, in that hour which could give it most solemnity, and which ought to give it most effect. I make no apology for addressing the enforcement of this advice principally to that subordinate class of hearers, to whose, and for whose condition it was immediately directed by the kind preceptor: for though it is equally the duty of all ranks, and the glory of the highest,

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(“rich men furnished with abilities, living peaceably
 “in their habitations”, being, as the son of Sirach testifies “among the famous of their times”,) I am here happily precluded by examples of the utmost harmony and agreement, from either necessity or propriety of applying such a doctrine to those of superior condition among us. And I would fain hope but little need be urged on this head to my lower brethren also: but little can be requisite, as long as you retain any respect, any gratitude for your reverend and amiable benefactor. To exercise and promote love and peace were his great objects: let them be yours, for his, for their own, and for your own sakes. They will deserve, they will find many friends, they will lose none. If HE was so affectionate, whose situation in life was so different from yours, how ought you also to be “kindly affectionated one towards another” who are so much more nearly allied in resemblance of condition, and in occasions of mutual service and sympathy. Make no invidious comparisons of merits and rewards. Grudge no distinction of kindneses, where all were voluntary, and all have been bountiful. Be thankful each for his own, and glad at another’s good fortune, in having served such a master, and found
 such

such a friend. The highest encouragements of assiduity, and most liberal rewards of fidelity will be bestowed with fitness, and remarked with pleasure, when they are received with gratitude, unmixed with envy or discontent.

One word more, respecting the benevolent but melancholy distribution that is about to follow, and I have done. The bounties of different kinds which the poor of this place have so frequently experienced, have afforded me sufficient opportunities of offering you my admonitions and cautions concerning the right use and application of them. On this account, I hope that the shortest hint will be enough, if any be at all necessary. I have ever told you, and your own common sense, and consciences must ever tell you the same, that there cannot be a more grievous abuse of the blessings of God, and of the bounty of benefactors, than to waste them in scenes of idleness and intemperance; to mix them with profaneness and debauchery; to rob your families of the advantage of such occasional assistances, and the comforts of such timely reliefs. But every one of these arguments comes with increased force, when the gift itself is consecrated,

secrated, like the blessed giver, with the awful sanction of the grave. It is then an highly aggravated prostitution; it is a kind of sacrilege, to abuse and destroy it. It is doing dishonour to the remains, it is violating the ashes of your deceased benefactor. Could his expiring, or his departed spirit have reached you as easily as his gift, it would have filled you with these benevolent impressions, "Be content, humble, peaceable and kind: be religious, virtuous and happy". Let your own hearts embrace these sentiments, and your own lives apply them, and you will enjoy a more satisfactory and heartfelt comfort, than even HE could afford you in this life: and will partake with him hereafter of that enlarged and ineffable happiness, which God has promised to all those who fear him, and accomplish his holy will.



F I N I S.

